

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission

FROM: Mariano Espinoza
Access and Outreach Specialist, Neighborhood and Community Relations

DATE: July 18, 2012

RE: Latino Engagement Task Force

Requested Action: Update on Latino Engagement Task Force

The Task Force:

The Latino Engagement Task Force (LETF) was established to support the City's Goal: Many People, One Minneapolis: *Inclusiveness is a treasured asset; everyone's potential is tapped*

The Latino community is a valued and important part of Minneapolis. The community contributes so much to the city's economy and culture and is the fastest growing segment of our population. The Latino communities' experiences, talent and wisdom are not only welcome but needed to ensure a prosperous city and community

The LETF has been established to:

- Support a framework for a sustained and comprehensive tool (s) to engage with the Latino communities in Minneapolis;
- Develop policy recommendations and a roadmap to achieve key strategic goals and objectives by year's end.

Last Tuesday, July 10 the Latino Engagement Task Force had an all-day strategic retreat at the McKnight Foundation to set up the goals, mission, outcomes and objectives of the LETF.

Twenty Latino Community Leaders from eleven different neighborhood organizations met with some of the City electeds and Department Directors to begin building the framework that will support future engagement of the Latino community.

History

Residents of Minneapolis take pride in the city's reputation as a multiethnic and multicultural oasis, a global village in the heartland. It is a well-known fact that the city owes its economic prosperity and its uniquely rich cultural diversity to ethnic minorities: Native Americans, African Americans, East Africans, and Asians and more recently to immigrants from Latin America.

According to the US Census in 2010, the Latino population in the city of Minneapolis is now 40,073 or 10.5% of the total population of the City.

When the old Sears building closed its doors in 1994, the Midtown-Phillips neighborhood was teetering on the brink of economic and social collapse. The storefronts that lined Lake Street stood in various states of disrepair, crime and unemployment were rampant, and local residents were struggling to make ends meet.

Today, Midtown-Phillips is a vibrant, multicultural neighborhood: an exemplary global village that bustles with economic and cultural activity. Thanks to the tireless work of the community the Midtown-Phillips has become a model of urban renewal.

Latin American immigrant families from the 6th and 9th Ward have been at the vanguard of this remarkable transformation from the beginning. Over the past decade, Latinos have joined forces with First Nations, African Americans and other residents along with local and national government agencies to launch successful small businesses in the Federally designated Midtown-Phillips "Empowerment Zone" and to develop the Midtown Global Market. Now an economic powerhouse and major employer (minority-owned and run MGM businesses bring in millions of dollars annually and employ hundreds of people), MGM paved the way for the sustainable revitalization of Midtown-Phillips and the provision of affordable housing and basic services for area residents.

Community Engagement and Representation

Despite their indispensable cultural and economic contributions to the area, Latinos still lacks *political* representation in the very neighborhoods they've transformed into thriving economic and cultural centers.

- Latinos would comprise approximately 35% of the population in a 9th Ward that included the Midtown-Phillips neighborhood.
- The neighborhood's renowned Anderson K-8 School Complex services more than 1,000 students and their families, 67% of whom are Latin American and More than 90% of whom are members of minority groups.
- No Latino has been elected to chair any of the 71 neighborhood organizations

Few ethnic minorities have held positions of power in our municipal government, advisory boards and commissions. Minorities now comprise 40% of the city's population, but:

- People of color hold only 2 seats out of 13 on the Minneapolis city council.
- No Latino has ever been elected to represent people in the City Hall.

Results from the 2012 Diversity Survey indicate that only 2.8% of Latino's are serving on the City's Boards and Commissions. It is clear that there is a lack of engagement with some of the newest residents in the community.

The opportunity:

Creating a Long Term Sustainable Model

We have an unprecedented opportunity to remedy the exclusion of the Latino community in our local Government and Community. Fixing the economic and racial disparities and responding to our economy's problems requires providing the adequate pathways that would enable disadvantaged groups to have access to all available resources.

Next Steps:

The Latino Engagement Task Force is in a planning process and we are learning together, growing and preparing to engage with the Latino Community at large.

The next steps for the Latino Engagement Task Force will be:

- To define and prioritize goals and objectives
- To create an action plan and
- To engage with the Community to hear their voices, concerns and ideas.